

MR. JERRY SULLIVAN, EASTPORT, ME.--INTERVIEWED BY  
RICHARD RATHBUN, NOVEMBER 30, 1893.

Used to fish years ago. Began fishing about  
1855.

As far as the frozen fishery was concerned,  
nobody knew there were any herring here in the win-  
ter season. That was when he first began fishing.  
They began to fish here for frozen herring about  
1870. In 1855 they carried on summer fishery for  
smoking herring.

The first weir was built long before his time.  
Treats Island was a great <sup>herring</sup> fishing place for such a  
small spot. Lubec Narrows used to have a good  
many weirs. Had as many again as now. There were  
weirs all along the inside of Campobello, around  
Friars Bay. And they went up the Cobscook River  
clear to the falls. Goves Point is up at the upper  
end of Lubec Neck. Were some above there then but  
only 2 that he knows of. On Moose Island there  
were about 8 weirs, on the Cobscook side of East-  
port. In St. Andrews Bay there were no weirs at  
that time. On the North Shore and around Letang  
there were weirs, but they were all small weirs,

close inshore in shallow water, and very different from the weirs there now. They had the same number of weirs in Lubec Narrows up to 12 years ago, but less since then. There were not so many weirs 15 years ago as there were 40 years ago, but they were larger.

The largest weir at present, he thinks, is Yankee Doodle weir, in Lubec Narrows.

In Cobscook River they are just about the same as they were 40 years ago. In Pembroke River and East Bay they are all new weirs. On the Cobscook side of Eastport there were as many weirs 15 years ago as there were 40 years ago. On the St. Croix side of Eastport there was one weir up in Little River 15 years ago. There are two weirs that have been in Harbor Dulute at least 40 years. About 42 years ago the owner of the Island began to lease them so there should not be any interference between the fishermen, but now there are a good many weirs over there. There are about 7 weirs over there, and most of them have been built recently, since the sardines began to run. But the two old ones are still there, and have probably been there 50 years or more. Does not think there are any weirs in Head Harbor now. Never knew of but two

there, one on the head of the island and one on the mainland. The first time he was ever down to Cherry Island, there were weirs there then, in the Narrows between Cherry Island and Marvel Island. There were two weirs there then. They kept changing their weirs a little every year. The most of them have been in deep water on Deer Island and the larger islands.

The bulk of the fish 40 years ago were taken down about Treats Island and Lubec Narrows. Get the best quality there in August and September.

Treats Island weir used to make the biggest hauls. It had begun to fail 15 years ago. That fishery began to fail about the time they began to dig down there in the Narrows, and before that, but not so much. Treats Island weir was given up about 8 years ago. It was not given up entirely until 4 years ago. It was given up then for a couple of years, and then they built it up again. Has not been built up this year, but was up last year and the year before, but it fished poorly then.

In Lubec Narrows the weirs fished poorly until this season, when they have done better.

Up Pembroke River and East Bay, they have not

got so many this season as they did last season and the season before. They have been good weirs, only the season was short. The season there is in September and May. Do not get very large fish up there, mostly sardine fish.

They built up the weirs on the Perry shore within this last 5 or 6 years, as a result of the sardine cannery. Those weirs on the Perry shore have not fished well, except the first two years they put them up. Since that they have failed.

The bulk of the fishing has been in the weirs on Deer Island and the North Shore. Last year there was a falling off there for a while. They began to fish well about as long ago as Lubec Narrows began to be poor. For a number of years there has been better fishing on Deer Island and the North Shore than there has been this way, for the last 10 years. Does not know what is the cause of it. Some years they strike plentifully in one place, and other years in another place.

Not any seining for herring about here to amount to anything at any time. It is prohibited on the Canadian side, and on this side there is no chance to seine. That is, there has been no herring around the shores to seine, and not very good



shores to seine on.

Gill-nets were used long before he can remember. Used to set gill-nets over in Friars Bay. Never set any gill-nets in Lubec Narrows. They used to set gill-nets up about Red Island; used to be a splendid place for gill-nets. used to set them off shore near the Wolves. The most gill-netting was done between Beaver Harbor and the Wolves; all the way from Bliss Island clear to Red Head. Used to fish a good deal in St. Andrews Bay for a few years, when they seemed to break them up. Only used the gill-nets on the north shore and in St. Andrews Bay in the winter, principally in January and February. In Eastport harbor they commenced to use them in August, with what they call the Quoddy River herring, which were the large size herring, just the same as the Newfoundland herring are now. They pickled them; were too big and fat to smoke. In Eastport River quite a lot of gill-netting done, but most of the gill-netting was done in the winter. All around Deer Island, Northwest Harbor, Deans Island, Sandy Island, all had their gill-nets there in the winter season. Off the North Shore around Deer Island they set their nets

do not drive them. In Friars Bay they used to set between Friars Bay and Treats Island down to Welsh Pool. They did three times as much gill-netting 15 years ago as they did 40 years ago, but it was done in a different season; it was in the winter. About 18 years ago began to use gill-nets off Deer Island. When he first came around Eastport they did not know there were any herring here in the winter. The gill-netting 40 years ago used to be done chiefly over around priars Cove. The winter gill-netting began about 18 years ago, and stopped 3 years ago. It was kept up pretty lively all that time. Broad Cove was a great netting place in the winter. Also right off in front of Eastport, up as far as Blannhards, which was as far as they could go, because the current was too strong. The gill-nets would only take large fish. The size of the mesh was from  $2\frac{1}{4}$  to  $2\frac{7}{8}$  inch,  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inch mesh would take about 9 or 10 inch fish.

They began driving herring about here long before his time. Were not doing a great ~~ex~~ deal of it 40 years ago, because they had begun to put up more weirs, but when he was a boy he used to hear his father tell about it when he first came

here, although they did not have many weirs then. He is 67 years old, and can remember since he was 8 years old. Has heard his father tell about driving herring before he knew what it meant. In the old days of fishing the driving of herring was very extensive before the building of weirs. The driving was before gill-netting. They used to drive herring up around East Bay and over in Remereys Bay, and Priars Bay, Lubec Narrows and Herring Cove. They used to drive them down at Northwest Harbor, Lords Cove. They drive principally in October. Used to get what they called scaled herring at that time. They were 9 or 10 inch fish. Never got very big herring. The big herring at that time never would follow the light; but plenty of small ones would. But they would not bother with the small herrings, but would go to where the large ones were.

For torches they used to use birch bark. Began to use kerosine oil about 7 or 8 years ago, when the bark began to get scarce. The bark did not make as bright a light as the kerosine does. Thinks the use of kerosine hurts the fish. Thinks that when they come up to the top of the water and

swallow the kerosine it kills them. It would also hurt them for using, because if the kerosine happens to drop in the boat among the fish they cannot wash it off. Does not think the driving has done any injury to the fishery. Does not think it breaks up the schools. If a man has a weir, and another man wants the fish, does not know but that one man has as much right to the Bay as the other. There are but very few people who would drive around a man's weir, and even if they do drive around it, it is not going to injure it a great deal, for they will not get around there on an average more than a week in a year.

Does not know whether there has been a decrease in the amount of herring around here or not. There are more means of catching them. All those weirs they have now are out in deeper water, and nearer the bay. 25 or 40 years ago those weirs were built up in the creeks, and they left the outside of the Bay clear. For instance, around Deer Island they did not have any of those outside weirs, and about Spruce Island and Sweet(?) Island, and the Spectacles, with the exception of Sandy Island. Been a weir around Sandy Island as long as he can remember.



The herring they used to catch here in August and September in the gill-nets have disappeared, but does not know the reason.

Does not know that they waste a great deal of fish by cutting the large ones down. There are a good many people here that have smoke houses, and those that are too big to put in cans, they put in the ~~smoke~~ smoke-houses. As far as fish are wasted, there are very few that are.

Thinks Treat began to make oil and pomace first. That was just before the War. They used any size fish they could get. Was in the business himself 7 or 8 years. Used large fish for making pomace as well as small ones. Some people had smoke-houses then, and they smoked what they could and made pomace of the rest. Since they got the sardine factories going the pomace men could not afford to pay the price. The 7 or 8 years he was <sup>herring</sup> in the <sub>business</sub> he could not afford to give over a dollar a hogshead for oil and pomace, because the pomace in those times did not amount to anything. All you got, about, was the oil. Nobody went into the manufacturing of pomace except Mr. Treat. No market in the country for it then. All it was worth was \$1.50 or \$2.00 a ton. And it had to be in

just such weather or he would not take it at all, and what you would get for it would not pay for the handling of it. Should judge about half the fish by weight were used for pomace at that time.

The first herring come in about Letang generally about the middle of April. Used to get them there first, and it is about the same now. They would be about 4 or 5 inches long. The people then used to say those were the young herring that dropped down out of St. Andrews Bay in the spring. Used to put up the weirs around Letang early in the spring to catch bait. They would go into Lubec Narrows along in June. Could not tell whether they came in April or not. They did not build their weirs up until the weather got warm; and it is the same now.

The spring fishery is different now, because the factories start up now the middle of April, and of course they fix their weirs up now in Lubec Narrows and about all around here so as to catch those young fish when they come. There are some of them find herring in weirs just as soon as the factories are ready to start; and then they generally hold off until along in May, and along about the last of June there is generally a let up on the

school until another school comes in.

Along about Pembroke they will catch them in April and May and along up to the middle of June, and then they seem to drop off. Seems to be a school of herring comes in early in the spring and goes up those creeks.

From the middle of June to the middle of July is generally the poorest herring fishery here. They get another run about the middle of July. It seems to be a different run. In the spring run they are all small fish. The largest are not more than 6 to 9 inches. In the summer run get larger fish. And the largest fish here about August and September. The best fishing generally is in September.

They cannot take herring here now after the 15th of December. That is, the factories are limited by law. They do not take any small ones after that because they have no use for them. The most of them let their weirs stay there. Some of them take the brush out and leave the piles standing, but the most of them just let them go.

There is no winter fishing in the weirs. The winter fishery stopped about 4 years ago, and,

practically, there are no fish taken in the weirs in winter. Last winter they caught a few herring at Grand Manan, probably loaded 4 or 5 vessels with frozen herring. The winter fishing would be entirely with gill-nets. Grand Manan used to catch them in the winter in weirs, but did not last winter, because they were scarce, but would probably catch them in the weirs if they came in abundantly again. Cherry Island people used to work their weirs in February.

The herring, when they are not here, would strike first down to the westward, at Cross(?) Island, and then they came up along to Grand Manan, and work in here. Those large herring go around Campobello, and come in around Deer Island way. Then when they could not catch any more here they used to follow them up the Bay of Fundy. The furthest of any fishing done by anybody from here that ever he knew of was up as far as St. John. About 6 years ago they made a great catch up off St. John; when they left here to work up the Bay, and by that time the frozen season was here, and then after that they began to catch them in their gill-nets away up to the head of the Bay of Fundy. This is



the winter school. They used to come into Cross Island the first of December.

The big herring, after the frozen season was over, they used to catch them in March and April in St. Andrews Bay. Used to pickle them.

The small spring herring enter Quoddy Roads from the east. Do not play up through the Narrows much. Strike Deer Island before they strike Lubec. Catch them in weirs there before they do at Lubec. You would find the herring at Cherry Island one day, and the next day may find them way up to Pembroke. Would not generally find them at Pembroke before Cherry Island. Generally when the herring come in here you get them all around in about every place in small quantities.

The largest summer herring is about 14 inches. The winter herring will average from 10 to 12 inches. Has seen plenty of small herring in the winter, but did not catch them because they used gill nets. They will catch them in the winter time more or less; they will stay in the nets.

Never saw but once, between here and Campobello, that you could catch herring in the purse seine; and that is the only time he ever saw them on the top of the water; and they were just as thick on

top of the water, that their fins were sticking out of the water. They generally swim some distance below the surface. In the cold weather do not come as near the top of the water as they do in the summer. They generally set their gill-nets down about 2 fathoms below the surface here, and about the same depth off the Wolves; unless in a very cold spell, then they will drop their ~~XXXX~~ nets deeper.

#### MACKEREL.

They had about half a dozen mackerel taken with the herring this summer in their weirs. The weirs were full of them 2 years ago.

#### LOBSTERS.

Lobsters are not anywhere near as abundant as they used to be; not half. More men fishing than there were 15 years ago; 3 times as many. They do not catch as many now as then. The cause of the decrease, he thinks, is on account of catching so many of them. Each man would probably set a dozen, and perhaps 2 dozen, traps; as many as he was able to take care of, and as many as he has room to set. Thinks about 20 traps would be an average to a man.

Would get sometimes, half a dozen in a trap, and then there may be half a dozen traps with none in them. The traps are set now mainly down around Deer Island. Do not set any in Eastport Harbor. They set them along Campobello and up into South Bay and East Bay, and Cobscook Bay above the falls. They will go up three miles above the falls in Cobscook River. Does not know whether they set in there this last season or nor. They fished them all up there so that they could not get any. Used to get the largest lobsters up the Cobscook River of anywhere.

### POLLOCK.

Pollock are not as abundant as they used to be; not anywhere near as abundant. They fish for them mostly between Cochrens Ledge and Head Harbor. Does not know what made them decrease so. They used to fish for them over in Friars Bay 20 or 30 years ago, and down to West Quoddy. Do not catch many at either of these places now. West Quoddy never was much of a pollock ground, but would always catch some there, and the same way now. The only way to protect them would be to have a close season on them. They take the large pollock here

in August and September. A school comes in here the middle of June, but it is a smaller school, and the larger ones come later. They stay in here until about the last of September. Some years they stay later. But whether they go off, or whether they are all caught, does not know.

### LOBSTERS.

They do most of the lobster fishing in the spring, ~~first~~ from the first of April until June. Before that time the weather is a little too cold. Done mostly during the canning season. But it seems that lobsters, when the weather begins to get a little warm, go off into deeper water. Lobsters like cool water the best.